

April 14. On May 7 he found two drakes and three ducks on the same pond; the drakes were chasing one another and going through their peculiar courting performances, with every feather of the tail expanded to the utmost, like a hand with all the fingers spread out. On May 28 they were still in the same place and were probably breeding there.

162. *MERGUS SERRATOR* L. Red-breasted Merganser.

Occasional winter visitor. Wharton shot one in the Gulf of Ajaccio on December 4; Whitehead saw a few pairs on the west coast from November to the end of January, and Backhouse saw one between Ajaccio and the Isles Sanguinaires in January.

163. *MERGUS ALBELLUS* L. Smew.

One female shot on Lake Biguglia was brought in the flesh to Jesse.

[To be continued.]

### III.—*On the Birds of Mauritius.*

By Captain R. MEINERTZHAGEN, Royal Fusiliers, M.B.O.U.\*

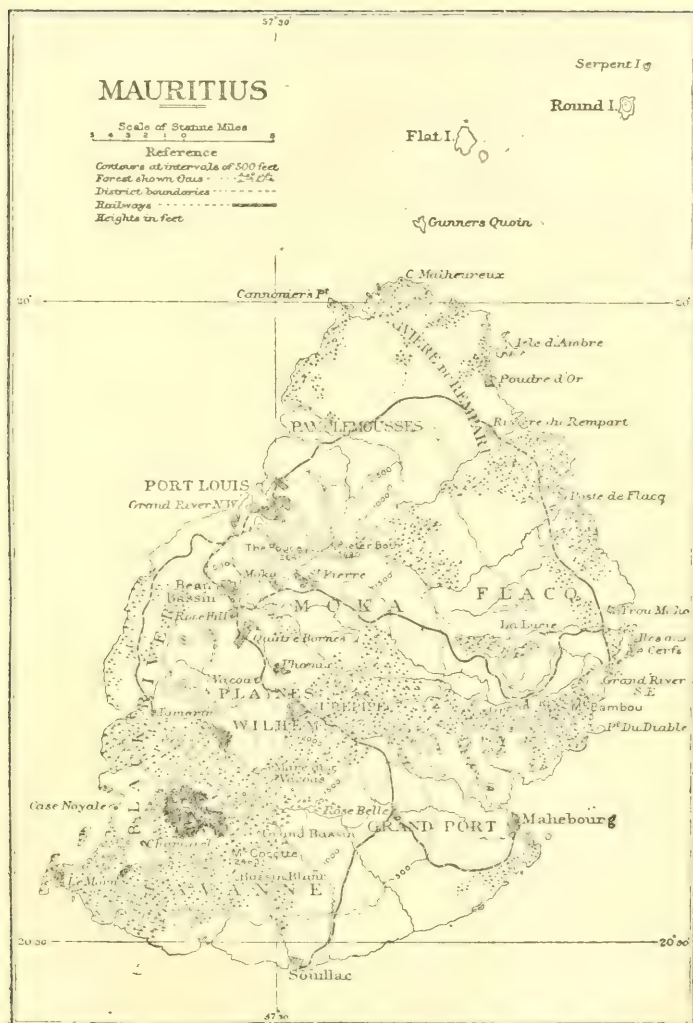
(Text-figure 1.)

DURING a twelve months' stay in Mauritius I had opportunities of visiting all parts of the island and of examining the bird-life. This is of great interest, containing as it does the remnants of a peculiar insular fauna, pelagic wanderers from the South Seas, migrants from the snows of Arctic Europe, and numerous species introduced from Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Nearly all the indigenous birds are now confined to forest and undeveloped land. None of these fast vanishing species have adapted themselves to sugar-cane fields or human

\* This paper does not include those birds that became extinct more than a hundred years ago.

Text-fig. 1.



Sketch-map of Mauritius.

habitations, whilst nearly all the introduced species have shunned the forests and wilder parts of the island.

It is a peculiar fact that all the proved native birds of Mauritius should be so confiding. Without one single exception they are ludicrously tame. Also nearly all of them have a sad plaintive note, and even their alarm-note is more a cry for mercy than a scream of terror. The song of the Merle or Coq de Bois, or the mournful cooings of the Pigeon des Marres, all express sadness, and heard in the dense forests of Mount Cocotte or in the Black River gorges, they make one curse the civilization that has brought such birds to the verge of extinction.

Although human agency is responsible for the extirpation of most of the Mauritian species, it cannot be held to be directly so. The ravages of pig, monkey, and mongoose must bear the full blame of such thorough and wholesale destruction.

For centuries the Mauritian birds have habitually sought their food in the wild forests which formerly clothed the whole island. As these have receded, so have the birds. Pigs and monkeys, introduced in the 16th century by the Portuguese, and the mongoose, recently brought in, have also become accustomed to make their homes in the forest, as much for convenience as for safety's sake. The pig has succeeded in extirpating all the ground birds, such as the Ground Parrot, and the monkey is now hard at work on the arboreal species. Even so long ago as 1801, Grant, in his 'History of Mauritius,' says: "The birds very much diminish in the woods, as the monkeys, which are in great numbers, devour the eggs."

In the following list I give the French or Creole names as used in Mauritius. I have marked with an asterisk those birds that have been introduced, and at the end I append a list of the species protected by law.

I wish here to express my thanks to both Monsieur Emmerez de Charmoy and Monsieur Hart, of Mauritius, for the frequent help they have given me in identifying the species and in other ways.

1. *FALCO PEREGRINUS.*

*Falco communis* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, i. p. 376.

Peregrine Falcon.

A single specimen of this Falcon was killed many years ago in the month of December after a hurricane. The skin is now at Cambridge (*Oustalet*).

Monsieur Carrié, of Mauritius, thinks that he saw a bird of this species in 1910 near Mahébourg.

2. *FALCO CONCOLOR.*

*Falco concolor* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, i. p. 405.

The Newton Collection at Cambridge contains a specimen killed at Mahébourg.

3. *TINNUNCULUS PUNCTATUS.*

*Cerchneis punctata* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, i. p. 434.

Kestrel. Mangeur de Poules.

This Kestrel is fairly well distributed throughout the island. It is peculiar to Mauritius, but has wandered to the neighbouring island of Bourbon, where it has been shot. It is not very shy of man.

Its habits of hovering and its noisy cries during the breeding-season seem identical with those of the English Kestrel. One observed near the Morne was seen to seize a shrew-mouse (an introduced species).

4. \* *CORVUS SCAPULATUS.*

*Corvus scapulatus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, iii. p. 22.

On three occasions has this Crow been introduced from either Madagascar or Africa, but it has never gained a foothold and has now ceased to exist. It probably never stood a chance against the local gunner, who kills every bird he can, whether game or not.

In Grant's 'History of Mauritius' (1801) we read: "Several couples of ravens had been let loose in the woods, to destroy the rats and mice, of which there remain but three males. The inhabitants accused them of devouring their chickens."



## 5. \* CORVUS SPLENDENS.

*Corone splendens* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, iii. p. 33.

Indian Jackdaw.

I have seen two pairs of this species in Port Louis. They were introduced from India two years ago, but do not seem to thrive.

## 6. LALAGE RUFIVENTER.

*Lalage rufiventer* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, iv. p. 101.

Merle Cuisinier.

In former days this Shrike was plentiful in the forests and hills of Mauritius, and, as its French name denotes, was an object of attention to the fowler, who could call it to him.

It only occurs now in the south-west corner of the island. I saw a pair in the Canaka Forest in October 1910. They were very tame, and uttered an alarm-note not unlike the usual screech of our Jay. A magnificent cock which I saw on Mount Cocotte in February 1911 was singing a melodious song in a bush.

An old nest shown me by a forester as belonging to this species was a clumsy construction of lichen, coarse grass, roots and twigs, placed about fourteen feet from the ground.

## 7. TROCHOCERCUS BORBONICUS.

*Trochocercus borbonicus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, iv. p. 302.

Coq de Bois.

This beautiful Flycatcher is to be seen in suitable localities throughout the island, but its numbers have been sadly diminished of late years. In the Pamplemousses gardens they are fairly common. They are never to be found far from large trees or thick bushes and seem to prefer wild guava, mango, camphor, and other densely foliaged trees. They have a plaintive cry as an alarm-note, a scolding hiss when annoyed, and an extremely pleasant song, very low but very sweet.

On Mount Cocotte and near Grand Bassin they are fairly plentiful and very tame.

8. *IXOCINCLA OLIVACEA*.

*Ixocincla olivacea* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, vi. p. 46.

Le Merle.

A species peculiar to Mauritius and rapidly becoming extinct. When this bird was plentiful it was considered a delicacy, and at shooting-parties a dish of forty or fifty "Merles" was no uncommon sight.

They are extremely foolish birds and must have been very easy to kill. I was told by an old forester that a man with a hair noose at the end of a stick could snare them as they sat singing on a branch.

They make a very untidy nest of about the size of that of a Thrush, or less, of dead leaves, grass, and moss, lined with fine grass.

They are now practically confined to the forest in the south-west of the island and are fairly plentiful and very tame round Mount Cocotte. They fly up into a bush as the passer-by walks along a forest path, and sing quietly but beautifully within a few feet of him. Their note is sad and plaintive. Their alarm-note is like the coarse "jack" of a Jackdaw, if one can imagine the noise transposed to such a delicate-looking bird as Le Merle.

The cock bird is made very conspicuous by his yellow bill.

9. \* *PYCNONOTUS JOCOSUS*.

*Otocompsa jocosa* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, vi. p. 157.

Boulboul.

Red-vented Bulbul.

This species was introduced in 1892 by Gabriel Regnard from Indo-China and has since increased at a terrific rate. It is now (1911) widely distributed all over the island and rears several broods a year. It is a scourge to the gardener and fruit-grower, and Mauritians regret the day when it was introduced. Its pleasing note and fascinating manner cannot fail to charm its worst enemy.

This species is a pure insect- and fruit-eater, and has probably largely accounted for the decrease of such birds as *Zosterops*.

There are two albinos of this species in the Port Louis Museum.

10. *ZOSTEROPS CHLORONOTA*.

*Zosterops chloronota* Gadow, Cat. Birds, ix. p. 193.

Yeux Blancs.

Zozo Fit-Fit.

This species is now a rare bird in the island and is confined to the forests of the south-west corner. I saw a single specimen near Curepipe in January 1911 and three others near Bassin Blanc in February 1911. They were all ridiculously tame.

The nest is cup-shaped and built of moss and grass with an occasional feather.

The call-note, which is the only one I ever heard, is not unlike the "chirp" of a young Sparrow.

There is an albino of this species in the Port Louis Museum.

11. *ZOSTEROPS MAURITIANA*.

*Zosterops mauritiana* Gadow, Cat. Birds, ix. p. 194.

Oiseau Blanc.

Oiseau Manioc.

This bird is generally distributed throughout the island and usually goes about in small family parties. The white rump is very noticeable and gives a ready clue to the species.

It is very tame and inquisitive. A mouse is quite sufficient to cause tremendous excitement. I have seen five of these birds "mob" a mouse in much the same way as Tits will "mob" an Owl. They got into a perfectly insane condition, whilst the mouse lost his head and squealed as only a Mauritian shrew can. The whole episode was very comic.

The call-note appeared to be a loud chirp, which is uttered frequently on the wing. The restless movements and jerky flight reminded me of our Long-tailed Titmouse.

There is an albino of this species in the Port Louis Museum.

12. PHEDINA BORBONICA.

*Phedina borbonica* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, x. p. 122.

Grosse Hironnelle.

These Swallows were formerly very abundant, but were almost completely killed off during the cyclone of 1861. They are now reduced to a few colonies and never stray far from the coast.

At Case Noyale they are fairly common and there is a large colony near Beau Champ on the south coast of the island. They were breeding in January 1911.

This species will probably increase to its former abundance, as it is not persecuted by local gunners.

13. \* PASSER DOMESTICUS.

*Passer domesticus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xii. p. 307.

Le Moineau.

House-Sparrow.

The Sparrow was introduced into Mauritius comparatively recently. The story goes that a British soldier brought a single pair out from home with him as a souvenir of the old country, but that he died at Port Louis and on his dying request the birds were liberated.

They are now numerous all over the island, but have a bleached dull appearance compared with the English bird.

14. \* SERINUS CANICOLLIS.

*Serinus canicollis* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xii. p. 350.

Serin du Pays.

Introduced over one hundred years ago from South Africa.

It used to be very plentiful in cultivated parts, but after the cyclone of 1892 the bird completely disappeared and is now extinct in Mauritius. It is still, however, plentiful in Réunion and will probably be reintroduced to Mauritius.

15. \* SERINUS ICTERUS.

*Serinus icterus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xii. p. 356.

Serin du Cap.

Cape Canary.

Imported from Cape Colony by the French in the 18th century.

A French writer (Le Gentil), writing in 1780, says :—“ It was imported from the Cape of Good Hope during the last war, partly as an experiment and partly as a present to the ladies. It is one of the most pernicious presents ever made to the island, as it eats all the crops and increases without effort.”

Another writer (Sonnerat) says that niggers had to be kept in the fields to frighten the flocks of these birds away, and that every inhabitant had to kill a certain quantity of them in proportion to the number of slaves he had, and take their heads to the local police station.

The species is now plentiful in the low-lying coast lands, but cannot maintain a footing up country, as there is very little food for it there.

It is a common cage-bird in the island.

#### 16. \* *PASTOR ROSEUS*.

*Pastor roseus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xii. p. 63.

Rose-coloured Pastor.

This bird was introduced into the island from India in 1892 by Gabriel Regnard, but died out almost at once.

#### 17. \* *ACRIDOTHERES TRISTIS*.

*Acridotheres tristis* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xiii. p. 80.

Le Martin.

Mynah.

The Mynah was introduced from India about the middle of the 18th century by La Bourdonnais. It was specially selected to kill off the locusts that did so much harm to the crops.

Grant, in his ‘History of Mauritius,’ says in 1801 :—“ The Isle of France was formerly exposed to the ravages of locusts. None of these noxious insects, however, have been seen here since the year 1770. It is pretended that the

Martin, a kind of bird brought here from India, which has multiplied in a very extraordinary manner, has destroyed them: it is certain that these birds feed upon them with avidity when they are just produced and before they have wings."

The Mynah is now one of the commonest birds of Mauritius and is said to do a great deal of good in keeping down insect pests. It is protected by law.

The birds are found not only among human habitations but in the cane-fields and forest. I have found them breeding in wells, chimneys, caves, hollow trees, tangled creepers, and in one instance in the breech of an old muzzle-loading gun at Vacoas.

Large flocks of these birds congregate in the evening and fly off to the hills to roost.

Several buff-coloured and albino varieties are in the Port Louis Museum.

#### 18. \* MUNIA ORYZIVORA.

*Munia oryzivora* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xiii. p. 328.

Moineau de Chine or Calfat.

Java Sparrow.

Introduced from the Malay Archipelago about 1750. By 1765 they had increased to such an extent that whole fields of corn were destroyed. In 1771 a kind of toll in heads of this species was levied on the inhabitants of Mauritius, whilst in 1804 it was suggested that Sparrow-Hawks should be introduced to kill them off!

The bird no longer exists here. As practically no grain is now grown in the island, the bird's natural food has disappeared, which accounts for its complete disappearance.

#### 19. \* MUNIA PUNCTULATA NISORIA.

Subsp.  $\gamma$ . *Munia nisoria* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xiii. p. 346.

Coutil or Pingo.

Introduced from Java about 1800.

Fairly well distributed throughout the island.



20. \* *ESTRILDA ASTRILDA*.

*Estrilda astrilda* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xiii. p. 391.

Bengali du Pays.

Introduced at some period from South Africa, and now well distributed in the island.

Plentiful in Flat Island.

21. \* *HYPHANTORNIS CAPENSIS*.

Subsp. *a. Sitagra caffra* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xiii. p. 431.

Slug-Slug.

Introduced from Natal in 1892 by Monsieur Meyer. It is now common near Flacq, but does not seem to spread beyond that locality.

In December 1910 I saw a few pairs building in palm-trees about five miles south of Flacq.

22. \* *FOUDIA MADAGASCARIENSIS*.

*Foudia madagascariensis* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xiii. p. 433.

Le Cardinal.

This brilliant bird inhabits Madagascar, Réunion, Mauritius, and the Seychelles. To the last place it appears to have been introduced and its claim to indigenous rank in Mauritius is not quite established.

Leguat ('Le Voyage et les Aventures de François Leguat,' Amsterdam, 1750, vol. ii. p. 72), a very observant man, does not mention it, though he saw *Nesacanthus rubra*. "Petits oiseaux qui sont assez faits comme nos moineaux excepté qu'ils ont la gorge rouge."

Grant also, in his 'History of Mauritius,' writes in 1801: "the cardinal whose head is bright red." This obviously refers to *Nesacanthus rubra*.

Monsieur Emmerez de Charmoy tells me definitely that the bird was introduced from Madagascar.

At present, in Mauritius, it is fairly well distributed. The brilliant red of the male bird, which glows like a ball of fire, is a very striking sight. From October to February it appears to be at its best. The cock, in the breeding-season, is very fond of sitting on some prominent twig and

showing himself off with a loud twitter, while puffing himself out to a ridiculous degree.

On the Trou aux Cerfs and at Curepipe in December 1910 I saw large flocks.

I found nests and eggs at Curepipe in December and January. The nest was about the size of a small Ostrich's egg, with a hole in the side. The eggs were three or four in number, in colour like those of the English Wheatear; but the size was somewhat smaller.

23. *NESACANTHIS RUBRA*.

*Nesacanthus rubra* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xiii. p. 485.

Zozo Banane or Oiseau Banane.

This indigenous species is fast disappearing from Mauritius and is now a rare bird even in the south-west of the island.

I saw five birds on Mount Cocotte in February 1911. In all their movements they are very graceful. They have a soft, sad little chirrup and are very tame, a trait characteristic of an indigenous species and very different from the boisterous, confident, but suspicious gait of *Foudia madagascariensis*.

24. *COLLOCALIA FRANCICA*.

*Collocalia francica* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xvi. p. 503.

La Salangane.

Petite Hirondelle.

This widely distributed Swift, occurring in Australia, New Guinea, Fiji, Réunion, and Madagascar, is common in suitable localities throughout the island.

In the hills behind Port Louis and at Chamarel I found numerous large colonies. They were breeding in December. The nest is placed in the cleft of a rock, and though it is cemented together by a gelatinous substance, I have never heard of its being used as food.

25. *EURYSTOMUS GLAUCURUS*.

*Eurystomus glaucurus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xvii. p. 29.

Le Rolle de Madagascar.

Roller.

This species is an accidental visitor from Madagascar. It

was first recorded by Desjardins, who caught a live specimen near Flacq in November 1826. Another was killed in Savanne in November 1837.

Since then several have been shot, and local specimens can be seen in the Port Louis Museum.

## 26. CUCULUS POLIOCEPHALUS.

*Cuculus poliocephalus* Shelley, Cat. Birds, xix. p. 255.

In the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London,' 1832, p. 111, there is a record of a bird of this species having been shot in the forests of Flacq, near the source of the Rivière du Poste, on September 25, 1830. This specimen is now in the Port Louis Museum.

## 27. PALÆORNIS EQUES.

*Palæornis eques* Salvadori, Cat. Birds, xx. p. 442.

Cato or Cateau.

This handsome Parrot was once very common in Réunion and Mauritius, but became extinct in the former island about 1820.

This bird still exists in Mauritius, and near Mount Cocotte or Grand Bassin can be heard at most times. During the breeding-season it becomes very noisy. I saw a pair of old birds on the Curepipe Rifle Range in April 1911. They were very tame and did not appear to be so restless as most Parrots.

The Port Louis Museum contains several well stuffed specimens.

## 28. \* AGAPORNIS CANA.

*Agapornis cana* Salvadori, Cat. Birds, xx. p. 507.

Petite Perruche.

Madagascar Parroquet.

This small Parroquet was introduced by the French over one hundred years ago. It was at one time very plentiful, but is now quite scarce. A few pairs have taken up their abode at Vacoas and can generally be seen on the polo ground there.

A scarcity of proper food has probably brought about the decrease of this species.

29. *ALECTRÆNAS NITIDISSIMA.*

*Alectrænas nitidissima* Salvadori, Cat. Birds, xxi. p. 163.

Pigeon Hollandais.

Became extinct about 1830.

Three stuffed specimens are in the Museums of Port Louis, Paris, and Edinburgh respectively.

“Pigeon Hollandais” was the French name of this beautiful Pigeon, on account of its plumage being the same colour as the Dutch flag (red, white, and blue).

30. \* *COLUMBA LIVIA.*

*Columba livia* Salvadori, Cat. Birds, xxi. p. 252.

Rock-Dove.

There are in Port Louis many hundreds of pigeons of various domesticated varieties. Every evening they congregate on the roofs of the houses and fly about three miles to an enormous face of precipitous rock in the hills behind Port Louis. This evening flight affords great sport, as the birds are extremely wild when once they have left the town. Every morning, soon after daylight, they descend in flocks of from ten to forty and spend the whole day picking up a livelihood in the filthy streets of Port Louis, where they are so tame as to be a nuisance.

These birds all breed in the precipitous face of the hills, on small ledges of rock.

I shot several that had reverted to the plumage of the pure Rock-Pigeon, and in the streets of Port Louis many such birds can be seen. These are also much more wild than those still shewing signs of domestic strains.

There is little doubt that we have here the foundation of a large colony of Blue Rock-Pigeons, which may eventually, if not persecuted too much, spread over the whole island and contribute largely to the sport of the island.

31. *NESÆNAS MAYERI.*

*Nesænas mayeri* Salvadori, Cat. Birds, xxi. p. 327.

La Colombe de Mayer.

Pigeon des Marres.

From the earliest times this Pigeon has never been

plentiful. A few still remain in the south-west corner of the island and are said to be increasing.

They are very tame and confiding and do not seem to care for the high forest trees. Monkeys are doubtless responsible for their extirpation. They have a heavy flight, but never go very far.

This species has a bad reputation from a culinary point of view. Etienne van der Hagen, who visited Mauritius in 1607, said that his men suffered from a peculiar sickness, characterized by extreme lassitude, which he argues was caused by this Pigeon ("rouges aussi bien par le corps qu'à la queue").

Bernadin de St. Pierre (vol. i. p. 125) also says: "There is a pigeon which tastes well, but to eat it is so dangerous that those who do are seized with convulsions."

Other writers testify to its bad effects.

Needless to say, the bird is now protected by law, which forbids any experiments, but its reputation was so bad that in 1818 the Natural History Society of Mauritius asked for "further particulars about this pigeon which was reported poisonous." Monsieur Emmerez de Charmoy has eaten the bird and tells me that its flesh is bitter, but that no ill effect was experienced.

Several pairs of this Pigeon are kept in private aviaries in Mauritius, but nobody has yet been successful in breeding them in captivity.

### 32. \*? *TURTUR PICTURATUS*.

*Turtur picturatus* Salvadori, Cat. Birds, xxi. p. 409.

Pigeon Ramier.

There appears to be some doubt as to whether this species was introduced or not. The bird, or varieties of it, is common in Madagascar, Seychelles, Aldabra, Réunion, and the Comoros.

It is of course quite possible that it is part of the ancient bird-life of the island: but if so, it is remarkable that it has not developed some peculiar form. In other islands such species as *T. rostratus* and *T. aldabranus* are, I believe, only insular forms of this species.

In Mauritius these Doves are now on the verge of extinction, though they were once abundant. A sugar estate near Mahébourg is the only spot where they still exist.

33. \* *TURTUR SURATENSIS*.

*Turtur suratensis* Salvadori, Cat. Birds, xxi. p. 444.

Tourterelle.

Oustalet ('Birds of Mauritius,' p. 75) includes this Indian Dove in his List on the strength of the description of a bird by Desjardins in 1834. From this description, the bird is undoubtedly of this species, but it was probably one of a few that had been brought from India and Ceylon, which had never gained a foothold.

When Oustalet published his book, this bird cannot have been plentiful, if, indeed, it existed. Doubtless it has since been reintroduced from India or Ceylon, for it is now extremely common all over the island.

34. \* *GEOPELIA STRIATA*.

*Geopelia striata* Salvadori, Cat. Birds, xxi. p. 458.

La Petite Tourterelle.

Pigmy Dove.

Introduced about 1750, probably from the Malay Peninsula. It was tried on Round and Flat Islands, but has ceased to exist on the former, though abundant on the latter.

It is very abundant throughout the island, having a partiality for human habitations and cultivated lands.

35. \* *FRANCOLINUS CHINENSIS*.

*Francolinus chinensis* Ogilvie-Grant, Cat. Birds, xxii. p. 136.

Perdrix Pintadée.

Chinese Francolin.

Introduced from Indo-China by the French about 1750.

It lives mainly on the high parts of the island near Vacoas and Curepipe, where it can occasionally be heard calling. It is by no means a plentiful bird.



36. \* *FRANCOLINUS PONDICERIANUS*.

*Francolinus pondicerianus* Ogilvie-Grant, Cat. Birds, xxii. p. 141.

Perdrix Rouge.

Grey Francolin.

A native of India, introduced about 1750. Very abundant, in spite of the mongoose, and can be seen or heard from the coast-level to the heights behind Curepipe. I have flushed an individual on Tonnelier's Island in Port Louis Harbour.

The cock bird in the breeding-season becomes very noisy, and from September to January its cry is one of the characteristic sounds of the island.

37. \* *MARGAROPERDIX MADAGASCARIENSIS*.

*Margaroperdix madagascariensis* Ogilvie-Grant, Cat. Birds, xxii. p. 196.

This Madagascar Quail was introduced into Mauritius about 1750, but has been extinct for many years.

Several attempts have recently been made to reintroduce it, but without success.

38. \* *PERDICULA ARGOONDAH*.

*Pardicula argoondah*, Ogilvie-Grant, Cat. Birds, xxii. p. 200.

Caille d'Inde.

Introduced about a hundred years ago by the French from India.

A scarce bird and confined to the low country.

39. \* *EXCALFACTORIA SINENSIS*.

*Excalfactoria sinensis* Ogilvie-Grant, Cat. Birds, xxii. p. 250.

Caille de Chine.

Chinese Quail.

Introduced from Indo-China many years ago and now the commonest of the three introduced species of Quail.

It lies very close when hunted and will scarcely ever rise a second time.

40. \* PHASIANUS COLCHICUS.

*Phasianus colchicus* Ogilvie-Grant, Cat. Birds, xxii. p. 320.  
Pheasant.

The Pheasant was introduced into the island from Saint Helena about 1880, but has never thriven and died out very soon, probably owing to there being no suitable food.

The Golden Pheasant has been tried, but could not be acclimatized, even as an aviary bird.

41. \* TURNIX NIGRICOLLIS.

*Turnix nigricollis* Ogilvie-Grant, Cat. Birds, xxii. p. 549.  
Caille de Madagascar.

Introduced from Madagascar at a fairly recent date.

It is only found in the sugar-cane and grass land on the central plateau, and is by no means plentiful.

42. GALLINULA CHLOROPUS.

*Gallinula chloropus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiii. p. 169.  
Poule d'Eau.  
Moorhen.

This familiar bird is common throughout the island in suitable localities. Its nesting-habits and eggs are identical with those of the English Moorhen, but its note is distinctly different, being harsher and more drawn out.

The Mauritius bird has been separated under the name of *G. pyrrhorhoa*, as having the under tail-coverts slightly fulvescent, but amongst seven birds that I examined, some stuffed and some in the flesh, five had very slightly fulvous under tail-coverts, whilst two were identical with European specimens. I believe that in Madagascar birds a similar want of uniformity in the under tail-coverts is noticeable.

43. \* PORPHYRIOLA ALLENI.

*Porphyriola alleni* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiii. p. 187.  
Poule Sultane.  
Purple Gallinule.

There appears to be very little evidence to shew that this species existed when the island was discovered. Considering what a remarkable bird it is, the fact of it not being recorded by early writers is strong evidence of its non-existence.

Sir Edward Newton ('Ibis,' 1861, p. 116) considered it to belong to the indigenous fauna.

Milbert ('Voyage Pittoresque à l'Ile de France,' vol. ii. p. 256) definitely states that it was introduced from Madagascar.

The species is plentiful in suitable localities in Madagascar, and I am inclined to believe that it was introduced by human agency into Mauritius. It is plentiful at La Lucie on the Rivière Sèche, where it breeds. This locality appears to be its stronghold. Wanderers only are obtained occasionally on neighbouring pieces of water. Formerly it used to be fairly plentiful on the Tamarin and Black Rivers, but it has been so persecuted there that it has probably died out.

At La Lucie Lake, where the birds are very tame, I had good opportunities of observing them. They do not seem to care about leaving the dense reeds. They are very clumsy flyers. Their particular delight seems to be to lurk about in thick sedge or grass and utter their weird screams and grunts at frequent intervals.

#### 44. STREPSILAS INTERPRES.

*Arenaria interpres* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiv. p. 92.

Tourne Pierres.

Turnstone.

It is not surprising to find this wanderer occurring in Mauritius. There are, indeed, few places in the world which it has not reached.

There are two stuffed specimens from Mauritius in the Port Louis Museum, and from time to time specimens are obtained from Madagascar, Réunion, and Rodriguez.

#### 45. SQUATAROLA HELVETICA.

*Squatarola helvetica* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiv. p. 182.

Grey Plover.

This wanderer from northern climes appears to be an occasional visitor. In the Port Louis Museum is a specimen shot at the Ile d'Ambre on Feb. 13 1905.

46. *ÆGIALITIS GEOFFROYI.*

*Ægialitis geoffroyi* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiv. p. 217.

Greater Sand-Plover.

This bird is represented in the Port Louis Museum by two specimens, one from Black River (Feb. 1904) and another from the Ile d'Ambre (April 1904).

They are both immature, and I am told by Monsieur Emmerez de Charmoy that he has on several occasions seen the bird in Mauritius and that it was always in immature plumage.

There are specimens in the British Museum from Madagascar and Rodriguez.

47. *NUMENIUS ARQUATA.*

*Numenius arquatus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiv. p. 341.

Le Courlis. Le Roi Courlis.

Curlew.

There is a specimen of a Curlew in the Port Louis Museum, said to have been shot in Mauritius and labelled *N. madagascariensis*. By its side is a specimen of the European Curlew (*N. arquata*). The former is a perfect giant compared to the latter, but I see that *N. madagascariensis* is not recognised as a good species.

Newton observed a Curlew in Rodriguez ('Ibis,' 1865, p. 150), and the bird is well known in Madagascar.

It is apparently a rare but regular visitor to Mauritius, as it is well known to the fishermen, who are never able to approach it. Its large size makes it unmistakable.

48. *NUMENIUS PHÆOPUS.*

*Numenius phaeopus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiv. p. 355.

Corbigu. Corbijen.

Whimbrel.

This bird is abundant on the coast from September to March. At Black River and in Port Louis Harbour I have counted as many as fifty at a time. I have also seen single individuals of this species in April, June, and July, all in Port Louis Harbour.

At Flat Island this bird appears to be resident. Two pairs were seen there in July 1910. In August of the same year I again saw them and one example was shot. In October 1910 three birds were seen. A nest with three eggs was found at Flat Island on Nov. 18, 1910; it was among some rough grass and close to the sea \*. In June 1911 I saw a pair at Flat Island.

49. *TOTANUS OCHROPUS* (?)

*Helodromas ochropus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiv. p. 437.

Green Sandpiper.

Oustalet includes this bird in his 'Birds of Mauritius,' on the ground that Desjardins described an example of this species when describing his *Scolopax mauritiana*. But Desjardins adds that it is common enough on the sea-shore. If this be so, it is curious that the bird should have so suddenly ceased its visits.

I am not aware of an authentic specimen having been obtained in Mauritius.

50. *TOTANUS HYPOLEUCUS*.

*Tringoides hypoleucus*, Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiv. p. 456.

La Guignette.

Common Sandpiper.

Two specimens are in the Port Louis Museum. I saw examples of this species on inland waters on three occasions: twice in January and once in November. It has been recorded from Madagascar, Réunion, and Rodriguez.

51. *TOTANUS CANESCENS*.

*Glottis nebularius* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiv. p. 481.

Greenshank.

The Greenshank has been recorded but once from Mauritius. An example was shot by Monsieur Lagesse in December 1830 near Rivière Sèche in the Flacq District.

It has already been recorded from Madagascar and Réunion.

\* Some confirmation is here needed. The Whimbrel breeds in the North in May.—EDD.

52. *TRINGA SUBARQUATA.*

*Ancylochilus subarquatus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiv. p. 586.  
Cocorli.

Curlew-Sandpiper.

The Curlew-Sandpiper is well known in Mauritius and appears to be a regular visitor there in small numbers.

There are, in the Port Louis Museum, two specimens shot at Flacq in February 1904.

I saw a small flock in the Port Louis Harbour in October 1910. They were associating with Whimbrels.

53. *CALIDRIS ARENARIA.*

*Calidris arenaria* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxiv. p. 526.

Sanderling.

I saw two birds of this northern wanderer on Flat Island in November 1910, one of which I shot.

Monsieur Charmoy killed one some years ago at Flacq.

54. *STERNA DOUGALLI.*

*Sterna dougalli* Saunders, Cat. Birds, xxv. p. 70.

Roseate Tern.

An example of this Tern from Rodriguez is now in the British Museum (Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. xxv. pp. 70, 71).

Sir Edward Newton noticed the bird in Mauritius (Trans. Norfolk Soc. 1888, iv. p. 553).

55. *STERNA FULIGINOSA.*

*Sterna fuliginosa* Saunders, Cat. Birds, xxv. p. 106.

There are specimens of this Tern from Mauritius in the British Museum.

56. *ANOUS STOLIDUS.*

*Anous stolidus* Saunders, Cat. Birds, xxv. p. 139.

Noddy.

A single specimen in the Port Louis Museum was shot in Mauritian waters.

There are two specimens from Mauritius in the British Museum.



I saw a small flock of these birds at sea to the north of Mauritius in November 1910.

57. *ANOUS TENUIROSTRIS*.

*Micranous tenuirostris* Saunders, Cat. Birds, xxv. p. 144.

A bird of this species is in the Paris Museum, killed by Monsieur Delisse off Mauritius in 1807 (*Oustalet*).

There are three specimens from Mauritius in the British Museum.

58. *GYGIS CANDIDA*.

*Gygis candida* Saunders, Cat. Birds, xxv. p. 149.

This species has been frequently observed near Mauritius. I saw a solitary individual near Round Island in October 1910.

This bird is very common at the Seychelles and has been obtained at Réunion and Rodriguez.

59. *PUFFINUS CHLORORHYNCHUS*.

*Puffinus chlororhynchus* Salvin, Cat. Birds, xxv. p. 372.

60. *PUFFINUS OBSCURUS*.

*Puffinus obscurus* Salvin, Cat. Birds, xxv. p. 382.

Both these Shearwaters are represented by local specimens in the Port Louis Museum. They are known locally as "Fouquet."

I found the latter species breeding on Round Island in October 1910, but not in any quantity.

61. *OSSIFRAGA GIGANTEA*.

*Ossifraga gigantea* Salvin, Cat. Birds, xxv. p. 422.

The Giant Petrel.

The first record of this species in Mauritius was made by Desjardins, who left a very accurate description of an individual killed after a storm at Flacq. In recent years it has been observed at intervals, generally in the south of the island and after a cyclone.

There are ten specimens in the Port Louis Museum, all of which have been obtained locally.

62. PRION DESOLATUS.

*Prion desolatus* Salvin, Cat. Birds, xxv. p. 434.

Hartlaub mentions a bird of this species as coming from Mauritius and as forming part of the Newton Collection ('Die Vögel Madagascars,' p. 377).

63. DIOMEDEA FULIGINOSA.

*Phæbetria fuliginosa* Salvin, Cat. Birds, xxv. p. 453.

Albatross.

Desjardins mentions a specimen which he found on the seashore at Mahébourg in May 1829.

I think I saw a bird of this species between Réunion and Mauritius in July 1911.

64. BUTORIDES JAVANICA.

*Butorides javanica* Ogilvie-Grant, Cat. Birds, xxvi. p. 177.

Garce or Gasse.

This small Heron, which can be seen at any of the muddy or sandy reaches of either river or sea, is resident. At La Lucie Lake it is plentiful.

65. BUBULCUS LUCIDUS.

*Bubulcus lucidus* Ogilvie-Grant, Cat. Birds, xxvi. p. 213.

Le Heron Garde-Bœuf.

Egret.

This Heron, resident in Madagascar and the Seychelles, is now of great rarity in Mauritius, if, indeed, it still exists. A specimen in the Port Louis Museum was shot at Flacq many years ago.

Individuals have from time to time in recent years been imported from Madagascar and liberated, but the local gunners, who cannot resist a peculiar bird, will never allow it to gain a foothold in the island.

66. SULA PISCATOR.

*Sula piscator* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxvi. p. 432.

Fou Blanc.

Gannet.

Desjardins mentions this bird as being very common in

Mauritian waters. He says that it nested on Isle aux Fous, outside Mahébourg Harbour.

About 1860 it nested on Flat Island (*Oustalet*).

The bird has now ceased to exist in Mauritian waters, but is still plentiful off Madagascar.

There are immature examples of this species from Mauritius in the British Museum.

67. FREGATA ARIEL.

*Fregata ariel* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxvi. p. 447.

La Fregate.

Frigate-Bird.

Sir Edward Newton found this bird at Round Island in 1864. I saw an individual in the taxidermist's shed of the Port Louis Museum, that had been recently shot in the north of the island by a local gunner (Dec. 1910).

68. PHAËTHON RUBRICAUDA.

*Phaëthon rubricauda* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxvi. p. 451.

Paille en queue à brins rouges.

Red-tailed Bo'sun Bird.

Resident in Mauritian waters, breeding on Round Island, Gunner's Quoin (Coin de Mire), and Pigeon Rock (near Flat Island).

At Round Island in October 1910 I found these birds breeding in large quantities. Nests with fresh eggs and young in all stages were noticed. All the nests I saw were on the ground, sometimes at the foot of a palm-tree, sometimes under some slightly projecting rock. The parent birds were fearless and allowed me to touch them, but if I became too familiar they uttered a peculiar piercing shriek and vomited up their last meal.

This bird, though protected by law, is terribly persecuted by the fishermen, who slay it indiscriminately on Round Island when opportunity offers, and sell it as food to the Chinese at Port Louis, who consider it a great delicacy.

69. PHAËTHON LEPTURUS.

*Phaëthon lepturus* Sharpe, Cat. Birds, xxvi. p. 453.

Paille en queue à brins blancs.

White-tailed Bo'sun Bird.

Resident in Mauritian waters, breeding in the forests in Savanne and other suitable localities.

This species was observed at Flat Island, Gunner's Quoin, and Round Island, but no evidence of its breeding at these places was found. Oustalet ('Birds of Mauritius,' p. 119) states that it breeds in these places side by side with *P. rubicauda*.

The only nests that I saw were far inland, and placed on a tangled mass of fern and creepers about twenty feet from the ground.

70. PHŒNICOPTERUS MINOR.

*Phœnicopterus minor* Salvadori, Cat. Birds, xxvii. p. 18.

Flammant.

Flamingo.

This bird was probably once a resident in Mauritius. Monsieur Emmerez de Charmoy tells me that large basketsful of their bones have been collected from a marsh.

In 1870 about fifty visited the island. About 1880 two were shot at Flacq, and this appears to be the last recorded instance of the bird's presence in the island.

It is resident in Madagascar.

71. \*DENDROCYCNA VIDUATA. †

*Dendrocygna viduata* Salvadori, Cat. Birds, xxvii. p. 145.

Sarcelle.

This 'Tree-Duck, so common in Madagascar, has been lately introduced into Mauritius, but is nowhere plentiful. It does not wander inland very much. A few can generally be found in the quiet pools near Flacq and Mahébourg.

It is a common belief among certain local naturalists that this bird is not an introduced species, but I can find nothing to support this theory.

† *Dendrocygna fulva* Salvadori has been frequently introduced from Madagascar, but is always kept in captivity.

## 72. \* ANAS MELLERI.

*Anas melleri* Salvadori, Cat. Birds, xxvii. p. 199.

Canard Sauvage.

Wild Duck.

This Duck was introduced from Madagascar about 1850. Though it has been very little persecuted, it has increased very slowly.

A nest with seven eggs was found between Curepipe and Mare aux Vacoas in September 1910.

## APPENDIX.

*Extract from the Proclamation prohibiting the killing, &c.  
of Wild Birds in Mauritius.*

The shooting, killing, taking in any place, and also the purchase, sale, or exhibition for sale in any public place, of the following birds is absolutely prohibited :—

Hirondelle . . . . .	<i>Collocalia francica.</i>
„ . . . . .	<i>Phedina borbonica.</i>
Rollier de Madagascar . . . . .	<i>Eurystomus madagascariensis.</i>
Oiseau Blanc . . . . .	<i>Zosterops mauritiana.</i>
Oiseau Manioc . . . . .	<i>Zosterops chlorophæa.</i>
Merle de Maurice . . . . .	<i>Hypsipetes olivaceus.</i>
Coq des Bois . . . . .	<i>Terpsiphone borbonica.</i>
Cuisinier . . . . .	<i>Oxynotus ferrugineus.</i>
Oiseau Banane . . . . .	<i>Foudia erythrocephala.</i>
Cateau de Maurice . . . . .	<i>Palaornis eques.</i>
Pigeon Ramier de Maurice . . . . .	<i>Columba meyeri.</i>
Martin . . . . .	<i>Acridotheres tristis.</i>
Mangeur de Poules . . . . .	<i>Tinnunculus punctatus.</i>
Paille en queue de l'Île } Ronde et de Terre . . }	<i>Phaëton candidus. Phaëton erythraeus.</i>

*Note.*—I reproduce these names exactly as they occur in the Government Gazette. I am in no way responsible for the French or Latin names.